

**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Canceled).
2. (Canceled).
3. (Withdrawn) The interferon regulatory factor (IRF) protein according to claim 39, wherein the modified IRF is an IRF-3 protein modified at at least one serine or threonine phosphoacceptor site.
4. (Canceled).
5. (Currently Amended) The isolated IRF-7A protein according to claim 39, wherein the at least one modified serine or threonine phosphoacceptor site is modified by phosphorylation.
6. (Currently Amended) The isolated IRF-7A protein according to claim 39, wherein the at least one modified serine or threonine phosphoacceptor site comprises an amino acid residue having an acidic side chain.
7. (Currently Amended) The isolated IRF-7A protein according to claim 6, wherein the amino acid residue is aspartic acid.
8. (Withdrawn) The interferon regulatory factor (IRF) protein according to claim 5, wherein the modified IRF is IRF-3 modified at a site selected from at least one of Ser-396, Ser-398, Ser-402, Thr-404 and Ser-405.
9. (Withdrawn) The interferon regulatory factory (IRF) protein according to claim 8, wherein the modified IRF is IRF-3 modified at Ser-396, Ser-398, Ser-402, Thr-404 and Ser-405 sites.

10. (Withdrawn) The interferon regulatory factor (IRF) protein according to claim 9, wherein the modified IRF comprises a carboxy-terminus domain of Ser-396, Ser-398, Ser-402, Thr-404 and Ser-405 and an amino-terminus domain from IRF-7.
11. (Withdrawn) The interferon regulatory factor (IRF) protein according to claim 6 or 7, wherein the modified IRF is IRF-3 modified at a site selected from at least one of Ser-396, Ser-398, Ser-402, Thr-404 and Ser-405.
12. (Withdrawn) The interferon regulatory factor (IRF) protein according to claim 11, wherein the modified IRF is IRF-3 modified at Ser-396, Ser-398, Ser-402, Thr-404 and Ser-405 sites.
13. (Withdrawn) The interferon regulatory factor (IRF) protein according to claim 12 having SEQ ID NO. 2 (IRF-3 (5D)).
14. (Withdrawn) The interferon regulatory factor (IRF) protein according to claim 12, wherein the modified IRF comprises a carboxy-terminus domain of Ser-396, Ser-398, Ser-402, Thr-404 and Ser-405 and an amino-terminus domain from IRF-7.
15. (Withdrawn) The interferon regulatory factor (IRF) protein according to claim 14, wherein the modified IRF has an amino-terminal domain comprising residues 1 to 246 of IRF-7 and a carboxy-terminal domain comprising residues 132 to 427 of IRF-3 modified by replacement each of Ser-396, Ser-398, Ser-402, Thr-404 and Ser-405 by an aspartic acid residue.
16. (Withdrawn) The interferon regulatory factor (IRF) protein according to claim 15 having SEQ ID NO. 11 (IRF-7 (1-246)/IRF-3 (5D) (132-427)).
17. (Currently Amended) The isolated IRF-7A protein according to claim 5, wherein the IRF-7A protein is ~~IRF-7~~ modified at Ser-477 and/or Ser-479.
18. (Currently Amended). The isolated IRF-7A protein according to claim 17, wherein the IRF-7A is modified at Ser-477 and Ser-479.

19. (Currently Amended) The isolated IRF-7A protein according to claim 6, wherein the IRF-7A protein is IRF-7 modified at Ser-477 and/or Ser-479.
20. (Currently Amended) The isolated IRF-7A protein according to claim 19, wherein the IRF-7A is modified at Ser-477 and Ser-479.
21. (Currently Amended) The isolated IRF-7A protein according to claim 20 having SEQ ID NO. 9 (IRF-7 (2D)).
22. (Canceled).
23. (Canceled).
24. (Canceled).
25. (Canceled).
26. (Currently Amended) A composition comprising an effective amount of the IRF-7A protein according to claim 39, together with a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.
27. (Canceled).
28. (Canceled).
29. (Canceled).
30. (Canceled).
31. (Canceled).
32. (Previously Presented) A commercial package containing as an active ingredient the composition according to claim 26 together with instructions for its use.
33. (Canceled).
34. (Currently Amended) A commercial package containing as an active ingredient the IRF-7A protein according to claim 39 together with instructions for its use.

35. (Withdrawn) The interferon regulatory factor (IRF) protein according to claim 39, which is a chimera of a carboxy-terminal domain of the modified IRF and an amino-terminal domain of another IRF.

36. (Withdrawn) The interferon regulatory factor (IRF) protein according to claim 35 wherein the amino-terminal domain of IRF-7 is fused to the carboxy-terminal domain of modified IRF-3.

37. (Withdrawn) A nucleotide sequence which encodes the IRF protein according to claim 39.

38. (Withdrawn) A nucleotide sequence which encodes the IRF protein according to claim 4.

39. (Currently Amended) An isolated interferon regulatory factor 7A (IRF-7A) protein, ~~the IRF protein~~ comprising at least one modified serine or threonine phosphoacceptor site in the carboxy-terminus domain, wherein said modified serine or threonine phosphoacceptor site causes cytokine gene activation by the IRF-7A protein which is increased relative to cytokine gene activation by a corresponding wild type IRF-7A protein.